1:Redfield E-5 (1926-1927) 1930
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CHAPTER XIII

THE INTERMEDIATE COMMUNITY

The culture of Tepoztlán appears to represent a type intermediate between the primitive tribe and the modern city. It has, one would venture, its nearest analogues in the peasant communities of the more backward parts of Europe, of the Near East, and of the Orient. To the extent that Tepoztlán is economically and mentally self-sufficient, to the extent that its social heritage is local and is transmitted without the use of writing, to the extent that all knowledge is intimate and personal and is closely associated with the ancient habitat of the people, the community resembles a primitive tribe. But just to the degree that Tepoztlán conceives itself as a part of the outside world, and that the Tepoztecans define their personal problems in terms of modern city civilization, it is unlike a tribal society. The Tepoztecans are primarily Tepoztecans, but they are also, if somewhat more remotely, Mexicans. Their society might be called a "folk" community, in a more special sense than that in which the term is often used.

So little, outside of the material culture, are elements of pre-Columbian custom preserved that it presents small opportunity to a culture historian interested in the character of the aboriginal society.

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171 of widespread contacts of the Indian peoples among themselves before the Spanish Conquest, and the common influence of Spanish colonial institutions since the Conquest.

Tepoztlán parallels, to a remarkable degree, many of the characteristics of Mexico as a whole. Within the relatively limited area of the municipio of Tepoztlán [24] we find practically the entire range of climatic zones of Mexico, from the *tierra fría* to *tierra caliente*, with their accompanying variety of natural resources. It is a striking fact that over fifty per cent of the total land area of Mexico falls within the range of altitudes found within this single municipio, that is, from approximately 3,500 to 9,500 feet. Tepoztlán is also distinctive in the way in which its statistical indices follow national figures for such items as the percentage of its arable land to total land, the percentage of its forest land to total land, and the average size of land-holdings. The rate of population growth as well as the distribution of age groups also closely parallels the national figures.

In Tepoztlán, as in Mexico as a whole, we find contrasting elements of the primi- ● 105 tive and the modern, the old and the new, the Spanish colonial and the contem- 177 porary. Tepoztlán has a strong Indian heritage; many pre-Columbian traits persist in the village today. The system of communal land-ownership, an important aspect of the economy and social organization of the municipio, has remained practically intact. Many elements of pre-Hispanic agriculture are found; corn, beans, and squash remain the staple products. Pre-Columbian traits of material culture have also persisted, particularly in house construction, furnishings, cookery, foods, and clothing. Among the more important of these items we find adobe walls, the sweat-house (*temascal*) made of stone and mortar, clay plastered granaries for corn (*cuescomatl*), the hearth (*tlequilitl*), the three-legged grinding stone (*metate*), the clay griddle (*comal*), the mortar and pestle (*molcaxitl* and *texolotl*), huaraches, tortillas, chile, and pulque. In non-material culture there are also survivals, especially in curing and magic, and in customs pertaining to birth and other stages of the life cycle.[25] The Náhuatl language has also persisted. As late as 1927 Náhuatl [191] was spoken by nearly all the inhabitants, although most of the villagers also spoke Spanish.

The large number of Spanish colonial elements which still exist in the village culture today were introduced early in the sixteenth century soon after the Spanish Conquest. The most important of these traits are the physical layout of the village with its barrios, streets, and central plaza; Catholicism and the churches; the Spanish language; a money economy; domestic animals, the plow and other agricultural tools; and the greater part of the beliefs and customs of the people.

Side by side with the pre-Columbian and Spanish colonial elements are many significant items of modern industrial civilization, such as corn mills and sewing

[101] [131] [24] While the village of Tepoztlán is the primary subject of this study, the village cannot be understood except within the framework of the municipio of Tepoztlán, of which it is the *cabecera* (head), a status roughly equivalent to our county seat. In this study, therefore, there will be frequent references both to the village and the municipio.

[25] Many of Bernardino de Sahagún's descriptions of native Aztec diseases and their cures are still remarkably accurate descriptions of present-day customs in Tepoztlán. Indeed, many sections of Sahagún read as if he had been relying upon Tepoztecan informants.

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machines, a modern highway and buses, clocks, poolrooms, patent medicines, powdered milk, a few battery radios, and one or two automobiles. The existence of these old and new traits, and the varying degree in which they are combined from family to family, makes for cultural complexity and heterogeneity in Tepoztlán.

Tepoztlán, like Mexico, has had a long and complicated history of mingling of peoples and cultures, and has never been a truly isolated village. The marginal position of Tepoztlán between the high plateau area to the north and the lower valleys of the south, as well as its proximity to the major roads of travel, has subjected it since pre-Hispanic times to influences from many areas.[26] Tepoztlán has been inhabited continuously since early archaic horizons, and the various ceramic levels unearthed in the village show a variety of influences which include Olmec, Toltec, and Aztec.[27] In the more recent pre-Hispanic times it was a center of religious pilgrimages, some of which came from distant Chiapas and Guatemala, and the fame of El Tepozteco, the legendary culture hero of the village, seems to have been known far and wide.

Since the Spanish Conquest the village of Tepoztlán has had even more contact with the outside and, in fact, has been closer to the main stream of national life. The great scenic beauty of Tepoztlán and its proximity to Mexico City and Cuernavaca, two key political and administrative centers, have played an important part in the history of Tepoztlán. Martín Cortés, the son of Hernán Cortés, and members of the Cortés family over a few generations, lived in the village in the present-day barrio of La Santísima. The barrio chapel was reputedly built by Martín Cortés just opposite his house so that he could hear morning Mass without going to church. The forced labor of the Tepoztecans in the mines of Taxco and in the neighboring haciendas of the Marqués del Valle, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, brought Tepoztecans into contact with Negro slaves

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[26] Edgar Anderson's study of Tepoztecan corn (see Appendix A, p. 449) also shows the marginal position of Tepoztlán.

[27] In the thirteenth century, the nearby towns of Chalco, Amecameca, and portions of Morelos were inhabited by the Olmecs, who were a Popoloco-Mixteca group. Wigberto Jiménez Moreno suggests that some of these Olmecs were later Nahuatlized. It is perhaps significant that to this day Tepoztecans make religious pilgrimages to both Chalco and Amecameca. Undoubtedly Tepoztecans had frequent contacts with both towns prior to the Conquest. Shortly after the fall of the Toltec empire some of the dispersed Toltec groups fled to Cholula which was an Olmec center.

Jiménez Moreno has suggested that the pre-Hispanic history of Mexico might be divided into two great periods. In the first, the coastal or Olmec influence predominated and in the second, the plateau predominated, particularly after the founding of Tula. The valley of Morelos seems from the earliest times to have been a meeting place for both the eastern and northern influence and its culture therefore represents a synthesis of both. As evidence of eastern influence in Tepoztlán, Jiménez points to the square shields of El Tepozteco, clearly not a highland trait. Square shields are an Olmec trait and are also shown in relief work in the room of the ball courts in Chichen Itzá. Furthermore, the ax shown in the figure of Ometochtli is called *itztopolli*, which is like the Olmec *macteputztli* shown in the Olmec codices. Wigberto Jiménez Moreno, "El Enigma de los Olmecas," *Cuadernos Americanos*, Vol. V, No. 5 (Sept.–Oct., 1942), pp. 122-25.

For ceramic evidence on this point, see the work of Florencia Muller, *Chimalacatlan, Acta Antropológica*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (March, 1948).

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The Mexican Revolution of 1910-20 was a turning point in the history of Tepoztlán as well as of the nation, and was a major influence in breaking down any remaining isolation of the village. Tepoztlán was in the heart of Zapatista country, and few villages suffered greater upheavals. The village was alternately occupied by opposing Zapatista and federal forces recruited from all parts of the country, and both left their progeny in the village, further adding to the mixture of physical types. At one time or another during this period the entire population fled to the hills or to Mexico City, Guerrero, Puebla, and other parts of the country, and as a result there is a large proportion of adults who have lived outside of Tepoztlán.

The Revolution also brought about the overthrow of the ruling *cacique* group in Tepoztlán and a general lessening of social and economic class differences. The communal lands which had been under the control of local *caciques* were now freely available to all Tepoztecans. Furthermore, the municipio regained the land it had lost to a neighboring hacienda and thus participated in the benefits of the national *ejido* program. In addition, the Revolution has meant a general rise in the standard of living, the expansion of educational facilities, as well as a weakening of the older concepts of authoritarianism and a corresponding strengthening of democratic values.

Tepoztlán mirrors many national trends and brings into sharp focus some of the most pressing problems of Mexico as a nation. The changes which have occurred in Tepoztlán since the Revolution, such as the introduction of corn mills, the building of modern highways, and the establishment of bus service to Cuernavaca, are typical of changes that are taking place over wide areas throughout Mexico. The poor agricultural resources, the relative importance of forest and grazing lands in the agricultural economy, soil erosion and exhaustion, deforestation, the small size of both private and *ejido* landholdings, population pressure, and low productivity are among the problems which stand out in Tepoztlán as in the nation. One of the advantages of studying these problems within the framework of a single municipio and village is that we can better understand the inter-relationship between geographic, historic, economic, social, political, and psychological factors; and above all, it is possible to know better what these problems and changes mean to the people themselves.

It is important, also, to consider the ways in which Tepoztlán is distinctive. If we compare Tepoztlán with other villages in Mexico, rather than with the nation as a whole, we find that in many ways it is atypical. Tepoztlán is a large village, larger than ninety per cent of the villages of Mexico, making for a greater complexity of social organization. Tepoztlán has been a political and administrative center of the municipio since the Conquest and even under Moctezuma; it has retained its communal lands,[29] a long tradition of literacy, and a local intelligentsia

[29] Simpson, in connection with an otherwise excellent critique of Chase's romantic version of Tepoztlán, has written that Tepoztlán cannot be considered a "typical" Mexican village or municipio because, according to Helen Phipps (*Some Aspects of the Agrarian Question in Mexico —A Historical Study* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1925), p. 120) it was the only village in the entire state of Morelos which maintained its communal lands. It seems to me that Phipps' statement is a considerable exaggeration. At least three of the municipios surrounding Tepoztlán did not lose all of their communal lands before the Revolution; their lands, like those

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since the middle of the last century; specialized industries or handicrafts are absent or have disappeared; and it is situated not far from Mexico City. These are the facts that tend to differentiate Tepoztlán from many Mexican villages. 171 [105]

In the foregoing pages I have attempted to place Tepoztlán in the broader Mexican scene in terms of its geography, history, population trends, agrarian problems, and other aspects, and have pointed out in what ways Tepoztlán is representative of the nation as a whole. Obviously, in a country of such great diversity as Mexico it would be impossible to find any single village or municipio which would represent the entire range of variations and differences. Tepoztlán is not here presented as *the* synthesis of Mexico but rather as *one* synthesis.

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of Tepoztlán, were not suitable for plantation purposes. This undoubtedly was also the case in many other mountainous areas in Mexico. On this basis I would be inclined to follow Tannenbaum's findings which indicate that in 1910 approximately 16 per cent of all villages and 51 per cent of all rural population could be classified as of the "free-village" type. (See Tannenbaum, *Mexican Revolution*, pp. 30-37.) Simpson, *The Ejido*, p. 36, considers this figure as a "considerable over-estimate." In any case, Tepoztlán would be typical of the free-village type. [114]

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5: Lewis E-5 (1943-1944, 1947-1948) 1955 ·
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During the first week, in early February, the clinic had 11 patients and after about two months, this number increased to 35. Then abruptly, in April, patients stopped coming, and the clinic came to a complete standstill. What lay behind the failure of the clinic? Why should attendance cease so suddenly and completely in the face of an expressed need by both the government and the villagers? To find the answers, we must understand the social structure and the people of Tepoztlán: their resources, hopes, fears, and attitudes toward authority. Because the medical service program was only one part of our team's activities and because the parts became linked in devious ways, it is also essential to explain the psychological phase of our research and the response it engendered.

THE SITUATION

A Requested Service Is Ensnared in Political Intrigue

Tepoztlán and Its People

Tepoztlán is an ancient highland village of about 3,500 people 15 miles from Cuernavaca, the capital of the state of Morelos, and 60 miles south of Mexico City. Since 1936 it has been connected by a paved road to the highway running between Mexico City and Cuernavaca and has daily bus service. Tepoztlán is located just above the malaria area and is considered one of the most healthful spots in the state of Morelos, with one of its lowest death rates. However, this is a relative matter. The average rate of infant mortality for the period 1930 to 1940 was 102.3, and the general mortality rate for the same period was 20.2.

The village includes peasants, artisans, and shopkeepers, but over 90 per cent of the 853 families earn their living from agriculture. Most of the land is mountainous, forested, and depleted. Less than 15 per cent of the total land area is arable and only a single crop of corn is harvested each year. Some own their agricultural plots or have rights to certain parcels of the public land which remain with the farmers as long as they continue to work them. Other farmers must till the poor soil of the stony hillsides belonging to the community and free to anyone who wishes to cut

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105 and burn away the trees and bushes every two or three years in order to plant corn and beans. Rapid erosion prevents the poor-land farmer from using the same hillside clearing year after year.

Both Spanish and Nahuatl, the native Indian language, are spoken in the village. About half of the people are bilingual, the other half speaking only Spanish. More than 40 per cent of the adults are illiterate. There are two schools in the village attended by more than 500 children.

The village is divided into seven *barrios*, each with its patron saint, internal religious organization, festivals, and a plot of land worked collectively by the men of the barrio to provide for the upkeep of the chapel. There is considerable esprit de corps among barrio members who act as a cooperative unit on some occasions. The barrio is a more meaningful unit to many villagers than the official governmental divisions of the village into political wards. In addition to the seven barrio chapels, there is also a large central village church with a resident Catholic priest.

105 177 The village has changed in important ways since the Revolution. These changes may be summarized as follows: a rapid increase in population; some improvement in modern health services, threatening the position of the curanderos; a rise in the standard of living and in the aspiration level of the people; a decrease in the number of peon and landless families (formerly these constituted the bulk of the families); the growth of a greater variety and specialization of occupations; a decrease in the use of Nahuatl and a corresponding spread in the use of Spanish; a rise in literacy and the beginnings of newspaper reading.

In sharp contrast to the rapid changes which have occurred in other aspects of life, there has been no comparable improvement in the agricultural techniques and capacities of the village. This has given rise to a dilemma; on the one hand, there is a rapidly increasing population and a higher aspiration level, while on the other hand, there is a growing sterility of the land, decreasing yields, and progressive difficulty in satisfying newly felt needs.

Setting Up the Clinic

177 743 Once we had decided to set up a medical clinic, we began to plan its organization. At first we considered the idea of setting up